UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/2018

8 November 1995

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) makes substantial progress towards mandate, Secretary-General reports.

* General Assembly elects five non-permanent members of Security Council.

* Secretary-General begins visits to Poland and France.

* International Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia appeals to General Assembly for adequate funding.

* South-South cooperation must be strengthened, Economic and Financial Committee is told.

* International action to resolve problems of refugees and displaced persons should tackle root causes, representatives tell Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee.

* Representatives tell Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) issue of space debris increasing matter of concern.

* Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) completes first reading of 1996-1997 budget sections.

* Oversight Office should establish procedures to prevent recurrence of administrative deficiencies, representatives tell Administrative and Budgetary (Fifth) Committee.

* Committee against Torture to hold fifteenth session at Geneva next week.

* * *

The United Nations Mission to Haiti (UNMIH) has made substantial progress towards fulfilling its mandate, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said in his report on the Mission. The Secretary-General noted that legislative and local elections were carried out in an environment free of fear, violence and intimidation. He said it was reasonable to presume that UNMIH would be able to ensure that a similar climate would prevail during the presidential elections expected to be held in December.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

As the end of UNMIH's mandate approached, the Secretary-General pointed out, the establishment of a professional police force capable of maintaining law and order throughout the country assumed increased urgency. Mr. Boutros-Ghali cautioned that while the training of 5,000 policemen would be completed by next February, most would have limited experience. He suggested that attention be focused on the selection and training of the Haitian National Police Supervisors and on providing the force with the necessary equipment.

The Secretary-General also reiterated his appeal to Member States to give immediate and serious consideration to contributing to the voluntary fund set up to support the creation of an adequate police force in Haiti. He proposed reducing the strength of the international civilian police component significantly before the end of the year.

* * *

The General Assembly today elected five member states as non-permanent members of the Security Council. They include Egypt and Guinea-Bissau from the African Group; the Republic of Korea from the Asian Group; Poland from the Eastern European Group; and Chile from the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

The newly elected member states will take their seats in the Council on 1 January 1996 for a period of two years replacing Nigeria, Rwanda, Oman, the Czech Republic and Argentina.

The other non-permanent members of the Council are Botswana, Indonesia, Italy, Germany and Honduras.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali leaves Geneva for visits to Poland and France tomorrow.

During his three-day visit to Poland, the Secretary-General will meet with President Lech Walesa and other senior government officials. He will also deliver an address before the University of Warsaw.

Next Monday, on the invitation of the European Parliament, the Secretary-General will visit its headquarters in Strasbourg, France. He will meet with the President and deliver an address before a plenary session of the Parliament.

* * *

"When mass graves are suddenly available for inspection, we should not be agonizing over whether the funding is available for travel," the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Antonio Cassese said. He appealed to the General Assembly for adequate funds for the Tribunal.

As the Assembly discussed the Tribunal, several representatives shared Mr. Cassese's financial concerns. The representative of the United States urged other Member States to join his country in pledging sufficient funds to enable the Tribunal to meet its responsibilities.

The representative of Malaysia said the work of the Tribunal was important and "must not grind to a halt as a result of budgetary constraints."

On the future of the Tribunal, Mr. Cassese said the Tribunal's importance would be greater even in the event the peace negotiations were successful. "If, at the end of a war, torturers and their victims are treated alike, the war's legacy of hatred, resentment and acrimony will not have been snuffed out, rather, it will continue to smoulder."

The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina said the issue was not revenge but justice, while the representative of the Netherlands stressed the need for cooperation by all States in supplying all available information and in the extradition of indicted suspects.

* * *

There was a need to strengthen South-South cooperation and involvement of the private sector and the donor community in triangular funding arrangements, the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) heard yesterday.

The representative of India said South-South cooperation should also be expanded by increasing product and country coverage and the private sector should also be encouraged to get involved in technical cooperation.

Speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, the representative of Botswana said the expansion of the Community in the last few years had provided that region with new challenges and enhanced prospects for regional economic integration and also the need for new and additional resources to meet those challenges.

(more)

* * *

International action aimed at solving the situation of refugees and displaced persons should focus on tackling the root causes of the problem, representatives stated in the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural).

The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia and Romania, said the best way to cope with a refugee crisis was to prevent it from occurring. Governments should tackle the root causes of conflicts that could trigger refugee flows, he said.

The representative of Ghana said the problems of internally displaced persons should be of equal importance to the work of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Currently, there were about 6 million such people in Africa. He expressed concern about the growing tendency on the part of certain States and people to close their doors and to refuse welcome to refugees who were in desperate need of asylum.

* * *

The subsidiary bodies of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should continue to consider the issue of space debris, which was an increasing matter of concern, the representative of China told a meeting of the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization). He said international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space should be increased to benefit all mankind. International space law and order should be formulated within the United Nations system to strengthen law and order in space.

The representative of Bulgaria said the Committee should pay special attention to the need to minimize the potentially adverse impact of space debris and the possible contamination of space and the Earth's environment from space objects with nuclear power sources on board.

* * *

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has concluded the first reading of the proposed United Nations budget for 1996-1997.

The Committee has reviewed sections on technological innovations; construction and major maintenance; staff assessment; and the International Seabed Authority. It also concluded the review of the three income sections - general income, staff assessments income, and income from services to the public.

The amounts proposed for the expenditure sections, after adjusting for factors such as inflation and exchange rate fluctuations, are $21.9 million for technological innovations; $46.4 for construction and maintenance; $368.6 for staff assessment; and $776,000 for the International Seabed Authority.

At the end of the first reading and the first round of informal consultations, the Committee would put together amounts approved for each section and those approved in respect of revised estimates and programme budget implications.

Several representatives made statements on the Seabed Authority. The representative of the Russian Federation said all the spending relating to the functioning of bodies of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including the Authority, should be borne by parties to the Convention.

Her delegation attached great importance to the Authority and its appropriate funding, said the representative of Jamaica. The proposed budget should be revised to reflect the Authority's requirement for a full year, she concluded.

* * *

Several representatives told the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) that the Office of Internal Oversight Services should establish good internal practices and procedures to prevent the recurrence of administrative deficiencies.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, the representative of Spain said that the Office should correct the deficiencies that had been observed by the Board of Auditors on the work of some organizations and also ensure the implementation of recommendations.

The representative of Norway said the increases proposed in the budget proposal were legitimate and reasonable. He welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal for the section.

The main task of the Office was to help the Organization establish a real management culture internally, said the representative of the Russian Federation.

The representative of the United States said the internal oversight functions had long been neglected and should be expanded. Effective internal oversight was a powerful tool for reducing waste and streamlining operations, he added.

Press Release DH/2018
8 November 1995

* * *

The Committee against Torture, meeting for its fifteenth session at Geneva next week, will review measures adopted by Denmark, Senegal, Guatemala, United Kingdom, Armenia and Colombia to prevent and punish acts of torture. Representatives from those six States are expected to introduce their reports before the Committee and respond to questions regarding application of the rights enshrined in the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Convention, adopted by the General Assembly in 1984, entered into force on 26 June 1987 and, that same year, the Committee against Torture was established to monitor compliance with the Convention and to assist States parties in implementing its provisions. It is composed of 10 independent experts, elected by States parties to the Convention.

During the two-week meeting, experts will examine information indicating systematic use of torture.

So far, 91 States have ratified the Convention and 36 have recognized the competence of the Committee under the relevant articles of the Convention.

* *** *